



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/662,886	09/16/2003	Takashi Nagase	023312-0109	1146

22428 7590 06/10/2005

FOLEY AND LARDNER
SUITE 500
3000 K STREET NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20007

EXAMINER

AHMED, SHAMIM

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

1765

DATE MAILED: 06/10/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/662,886

Applicant(s)

NAGASE ET AL.

Examiner

Shamim Ahmed

Art Unit

1765

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION:

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 16 September 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 21-23 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 16 September 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-20, drawn to a process, classified in class 216, subclass 41.
 - II. Claims 21-23, drawn to a product, classified in class 257, subclass 79+.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

2. Inventions I and II are related as process of making and product made. The inventions are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the process as claimed can be used to make other and materially different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process (MPEP § 806.05(f)). In the instant case the product can be made by different process such as by laser ablation.
3. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.
4. During a telephone conversation with Mathew Mulkeen on 6/2/05 a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-20. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 21-23 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

5. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Drawings

6. Figure 1 should be designated by a legend such as --Prior Art-- because only that which is old is illustrated. See MPEP § 608.02(g). Corrected drawings in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein

Art Unit: 1765

were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

9. Claim 1,3,6,8-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishimura (US 2003/0067259) in view of Yamada et al (6,245,249).

Nishimura disclose a process including the steps of forming a metal mask of aluminum (41) over an electrode layer (4), wherein forming an opening in the masking layer in order to form a pattern using photolithography (paragraph 0087-paragraph 0092).

Nishimura also teaches that the electrode layer could comprise gold (Au) (paragraph 0086).

Nishimura further teaches that the pattern is transferred into the electrode layer by dry etching such as plasma etching, wherein the opening (w1) between the gate electrode is in the range of nanometer scale and finally the remaining metal mask pattern is removed (paragraphs 0099 and 0147-0154).

Nishimura fails to teach the metal mask (41) is etched by focused ion beam.

However, Yamada et al teaches a patterning process, wherein both the photolithography and focused ion beam can be used for fine precision (col.5, lines 63-col.6, lines 8).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skilled in the art at the time of claimed invention to combine Yamada et al's teaching into Nishimura's process for efficiently forming patterns with fine precision as taught by Yamada et al.

10. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishimura (US 2003/0067259) in view of Yamada et al (6,245,249) and further in view of Goto et al (5,569,569).

Modified Nishimura discusses above in the paragraph 9 but fails to teach forming an adhesion layer between the insulating substrate and the electrode layer.

However, Goto et al teach forming an adhesion layer between the insulating substrate (4) and absorber layer of gold (6) to enhance an adhering force between them (col.5, lines 40-44).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skilled in the art at the time of claimed invention to combine Goto et al's teaching into modified Nishimura's process for increasing adhering force between the insulating substrate and the metal electrode layer as taught by Goto et al.

11. Claims 4-7,10-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishimura (US 2003/0067259) in view of Yamada et al (6,245,249) and further in view of Nakamura et al (5,773,843).

Modified Nishimura discusses above in the paragraph 9 but fails to teach the specific gallium ion dose and the applied voltage during the focused ion beam etching.

Art Unit: 1765

However, in a process of fabricating metal electrode, Nakamura et al teach that etching is performed using gallium ion source with acceleration voltage of ions of 50kV and the dose is 10^{18} ions/cm² (col.5, lines 32-36).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skilled in the art at the time of claimed invention to combine Nakamura et al's teaching into modified Nishimura's process for effective etching with desired size of the opening as taught by Nakamura et al.

As to claims 7,13-14,16-17 and 19, modified Nishimura fails to explicitly teach that the gap of the electrode is in the range of 2 nm to 12 nm.

However, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skilled in the art to optimize the claimed electrode gap, since it has been held that discovering an optimum value of a result effective variable involves only routine skill in the art. In re Boesch, 617 F.2d 272, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980).

By doing so, one could increase the formation of electrodes in a surface by reducing the electrode gaps and thereby reducing the processing cost.

Conclusion

12. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Chaudhari et al (4,293,374) and Wolfe (4,085,330) both teaches conventional FIB etching.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Shamim Ahmed whose telephone number is (571) 272-1457. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Thu (7:00-5:30) Every Friday Off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nadine G. Norton can be reached on (571) 272-1465. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Shamim Ahmed
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1765

SA
June 7, 2005